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ABSTRACT

This study sought to identify personality differences in abused versus non-abused women. Abused women (N=25) were from several centers for abused women and non-abused women (N=39) were students in evening psychology classes. All subjects completed Rubin's Love Scale, the abbreviated Dominance and Romanticism Scale, Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale, and questions about emotional and physical abuse and personal history. It was hypothesized that abused women would score lower on the Self-Esteem Scale and higher on both the Love Scale and the Dominance and Romanticism Scale than non-abused women. In support of the hypothesis, both the physically and emotionally abused groups were significantly lower in self-esteem than the non-abused groups. Both the physically and emotionally abused groups were more likely to endorse beliefs of dominance and romanticism than the non-abused groups. The hypothesis that abused women would score higher on the Love Scale was not supported; the physically and emotionally abused groups were significantly lower on the Love Scale score than the non-abused groups. Both the physically and the emotionally abused groups were significantly lower on the Love Scale score than the non-abused groups and both were significantly older than the non-abused groups. Although experience of abuse was confounded with age, age was not significantly correlated with any of the dependent measures. (Author/ABL)

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SELF-ESTEEM AND ATTITUDES TOWARD LOVE IN ABUSED AND NON-ABUSED WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to identify personality differences in abused versus non-abused women. The sample of abused women consists of women from several centers for battered women. The non-abused sample consists of women enrolled in evening psychology classes at Ursinus College. All subjects completed Rubin's Love Scale (Rubin, 1970), the abbreviated Dominance and Romanticism Scale (Follingstad et al.), Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1963), and seven other questions developed by the researchers pertaining to emotional and physical abuse and personal history. It was hypothesized that abused women would score lower on the Self-Esteem Scale and higher on both the Love Scale and the Dominance and Romanticism Scale than non-abused women. In support of the hypothesis, both the physically and the emotionally abused groups were significantly lower in self-esteem than the non-abused groups. Both the physically and the emotionally abused groups were more likely to endorse beliefs of dominance and romanticism than the non-abused groups. The hypothesis that abused women would score higher on the Love Scale was not supported; the physically and the emotionally abused groups were significantly lower on the Love Scale score than the non-abused groups. Both the physically and the emotionally abused groups were significantly older than the non-abused groups. Although experience of abuse was confounded with age, age was not significantly correlated with any of the dependent measures.

Each year three to four million women are beaten in their homes (Domestic Violence Fact Sheet 1990). Just as startling is the fact that approximately 30% of all women seeking treatment in hospital emergency rooms are victims of domestic violence (Ten Facts About Domestic Violence 1990). Although these figures are frightening, even more alarming is the fact that many women remain in violent relationships even though they may be risking their lives (Strube 1988). From a practical standpoint, understanding why women stay in violent relationships is crucial in designing intervention programs. The research presented in this paper will examine personality differences between abused and non-abused women. The exploration of differences in personality traits may give us insight into why some women are unable to break out of abusive relationships. The tendency to interpret dominance as an expression of romantic intensity, feelings of love for the abusive partner, and self-esteem are all factors which will be explored. An understanding of potential differences between abused and non-abused women may be valuable in helping women escape from violent relationships.

BACKGROUND

R.J. Gelles conducted one of the earliest studies which attempted to identify the factors involved in the decisions abused women make to leave violent relationships (1976). In his study Gelles examined the modes of intervention (called police, separation or divorce, went to an agency) used by 41 women in abusive relationships. Gelles also investigated variables that were hypothesized to influence decisions to stay in or leave abusive relationships. These variables are: severity and frequency of violence, exposure to violence in the woman's family of origin, and barriers to leaving (woman's age, number of children).

Data was collected by interviewing each woman. Over 78% of the women were still living with their assaulters at the time of their interview. The results indicated that the more severe the abuse, the more likely the woman was to seek some form of intervention. Divorce or separation were the most likely forms of intervention. The frequency of the abuse was related to the type of intervention. Women who were hit frequently most often called the police for intervention, whereas the women who were hit less frequently opted for a divorce or separation. Gelles suggested that women who are hit frequently desire immediate intervention. No evidence was found for a relationship between experience with violence in the woman's family of origin and type of intervention. There was no evidence that the women who left their relationships were better educated, more likely to be employed, or had fewer children than those women who remained. There was a slight tendency for the divorced or separated women to be more likely to report having observed their own parents engaged in violent behavior toward each other, but there was no effect resulting from having been a victim of violence as a child. Gelles concluded that several variables were found to distinguish

women who left their abusive relationship from those who remained in the relationships, but because the interviews were conducted after the relationship decision was made, the responses of the women were subject to distortions.

In another study which examined variables that might predict relationship decisions, Snyder and Fruchtman (1981) interviewed 119 women admitted to a shelter in Detroit. Six to ten weeks following their discharge from the shelter, 48 women were contacted to determine their relationship status. During the initial interview only 34% of the women expressed that their intentions were to return to their abusive spouse; however, at the time of the follow-up interview it was found that 60% of the women had returned to live with their abusive spouses. Women who were more likely to return to abusive relationships were caucasian, beaten less frequently, less likely to have separated before, less likely to report child abuse, and more likely to have retaliated against their abuser. This study points out factors that are potentially important in influencing the decision to leave an abusive relationship (Strube 1988).

A study by Strube and Barbour (1984) found that women who left abusive relationships were more likely to have obtained a protection order than those who remained in the relationships. Also, predictors such as length of relationship, employment status, economic hardship (subjective), love (subjective), ethnicity, and having no where else to go were reliably related to relationship status (Strube 1988).

In drawing conclusions from an overview of studies, Strube stated that commitment level and economic position have been shown to be important determinants of relationship decisions (1988). Those women who were more committed to their relationship were less likely to leave. These women were more likely to say that they intended to return to the abuser when interviewed at discharge from a shelter. Research examining the economic position of abused women has found that women who lack the economic means to establish an independent living arrangement are likely to remain with their abusers (Strube 1988).

In addition to exploring relationship predictors, research has also investigated individual characteristics of abused women. Kuhl asserted that before effective treatment of abused women can take place, more knowledge about the characteristics of the women must be discovered (1985). She stated that the "mythology surrounding wife abuse must be examined and corrected through the change in perceptions regarding mythological 'needs' of abused women". The purpose of Kuhl's research was to investigate the relationship between the need structures of abused women and the abuse which was experienced.

The subjects consisted of 115 women seeking treatment at domestic violence programs. At intake the women were administered the Domestic Violence Assessment Form and Gough's Adjective Check List. The abused women's scores were compared to a normative sample. The results showed no positive associations for the scales of Femininity, Masculinity,

Abatement, and Nurturance. Significant differences were found on 13 scales. The differences indicate that the abused women seem less realistic and authentic in their self-descriptions. They make fewer attempts to understand their own behavior and the behavior of others. They appear cautious, try to avoid confrontation, and tend to retreat into fantasy. The abused women were skeptical of others' intentions, and appeared to need to keep others at a distance. In interpreting these results, Kuhl pointed out the importance of the question of whether the differences represent personality need dispositions toward abuse or whether they represent a result of abuse.

In addition, research has examined attributions of blame for marital violence. Andrews and Brewine hypothesized that blame for violence would change with marital circumstances (1990). It was expected that women would show a greater tendency for self-blame while still involved in violent marital relationships. Those women no longer in violent marital relationships were expected to show a greater tendency to blame their ex-partners. The researchers aimed to ascertain the types of attributions women give for marital violence. Special attention was paid to the categories of behavioral and characterological self-blame. Also, the researchers predicted that those women who experienced childhood abuse would be more likely to blame their own character and women who had no history of child abuse would be more likely to blame their own behavior.

The subject group consisted of women who took part in a longitudinal study to investigate the onset and course of depressive disorder over a three year period. A total of 286 women participated in the entire study. The subjects were interviewed three separate times approximately one year apart.

The results indicated that reports of self-blame for a past violent relationship did not differ from reports of women currently in violent relationships. Women no longer in a violent relationship reported significantly less current self-blame then those still in such a relationship. There was no significant difference in the ratings of self-blame between women who experienced early abuse and women who did not. A difference was found when self-blame was reported; those who experienced early abuse tended to blame their own character and women who did not experience early abuse tended to blame their behavior. Concerning attributions of those who experienced very severe violence, 67% attributed blame to their own character and 46% blamed their partner's behavior. The data showed that women who blamed their own character and those who blamed their partner's character experienced more severe violence than the other subjects. It may be the case that when violence is so extreme one's own behavior or other situational factors are seen as insufficient causes, compared with either one's own or one's partner's character.

In a study by Raymond & Bruschi interesting implications are made concerning the differences between emotionally abused women's reported feelings and their behaviors (1989). The sample consisted of 90 unmarried undergraduate female students.

Thirty-five items from the Psychological Abuse Scale for Married Women (Stein, 1982; Raymond, Gillman, & Donner, 1978) were revised to apply to unmarried women. The items were categorized as either positive (kindness) or negative (abusiveness). Two separate scores were generated.

The women reported that negative behaviors occur less than once or twice in their relationship, but they reported more occurrences of negative feelings regarding the relationship. Likewise, the women reported positive behaviors on an average of several times a month, and they reported positive feelings even more frequently. There is a much larger discrepancy between positive feelings and behaviors. Several items distinguished between past and present relationships. Behaviorally, there were few differences between past and present relationships, but there were many significant differences in feelings. Present relationships were perceived more positively. Overall, these results show that global feelings are not always in congruence with the specific behaviors of relationships.

The researchers suggested that a possible explanation for the discrepancy between feelings and behaviors is that the women's feelings reflect a generalization that "represents a global impression that is more than the individual parts(behavior) and behaviors that do not fit in can be overlooked". Raymond and Bruschi suggested several processes which may be going on. Maybe the woman is using denial. Perhaps there is an element of social desirability at work. Raymond and Bruschi give the example of "the standard response to "How are you? is 'fine' regardless of what's going on". Maybe "her psyche tricks her into thinking things feel better (or worse) than they really are". The researchers suggested that "women need to be educated to put all aspects of their relationship together, not just use global impressions to pay attention to the everyday behaviors and not be willing to explain away experiences that do not fit with their ideal of how it is supposed to be between a man and a woman".

ATTITUDES TOWARD LOVE AND SELF-ESTEEM

To many people physical abuse and love are mutually exclusive of each other. However, it is the experience of those who work with battered women that love is often cited by women as a reason for staying in an abusive relationship. It is difficult for many people to understand how a woman could "love" a man who hits her, threatens her life, and breaks her bones. It is the purpose of this research to explore battered women's feelings of love for their batterers and for themselves, as embodied by their self-esteem.

In a study by Henton et al., romance and dating violence was examined in high school students (1983). The sample used were volunteers from five high schools. There was a total of 644 respondents; 29 males and 49 females had experienced dating violence either as a victim or an aggressor. From the respondents who had never experienced dating violence, a matched sample of 78 students was chosen to serve as the

comparison group. The questionnaire administered assessed the types of violent behaviors involved, the most recent abusive relationship, the students' reactions to the violence, their interpretation of the violence, and general attitudes toward pre-marital and marital violence.

From among the many results of this study, several observations are relevant to the discussion of love and the tendency to interpret dominance as an expression of romantic intensity. While only 4.4% of the victims and 3.0% of the aggressors interpreted abusive behaviors as meaning "hate", a surprising 26.5% of the victims and 31.3% of the aggressors interpreted abusive behaviors as meaning "love". The researchers point out that at first glance it appears illogical for a person to interpret abusive behaviors as meaning one loved or was loved by one's partner. However, they discuss the widely accepted practice of physical punishment for disciplining a child and the possibility that this "same attitude toward 'controlling by hitting' may carry over into other loving relationships as adults". Ironically, more that one-half of the respondents involved with abuse claimed that their relationships either improved or did not change following the abuse. Also, 41% of the individuals were still dating the partner with whom the abuse had occurred.

Henton suggests that a great deal of minimization or disregard of the violent incident must be occurring for a relationship which evokes pain and unpleasantness to continue. The interpretation of violence as love by almost one-third of the sample leads Henton to assert that perhaps an element of idealization is at work. Further, "the struggle to integrate acts of violence as an acceptable component of couple interactions without sacrificing one's relationship ideal might necessarily include a search for positive reasons to explain why the physical abuse occurred". It is this ability to define violence as love that may account for the reports that the violence either did not change or actually improved the relationship. Many respondents described and analyzed their situations in ways that suggested that they were protecting romantic illusions rather than allowing the violent episodes to shatter their romantic ideals. Henton supports this assertion by pointing out that almost one-half of the individuals accepted joint responsibility for initiating the violence. Other evidence for the effort to keep romanticism alive is the tendency to avoid telling others about the violence, thus avoiding the possibility of interference in the relationship by others. Also presented as evidence is the fact that individuals were more apt to end the relationship if they believed they had acceptable alternative dating partners, thus, another romantic ideal to turn to.

The interpretation of abusive behaviors as an expression of love which Henton explored in her research was also examined by Follingstad et al. (1988). Follingstad developed a measure to assess the tendencies to interpret dominance as an expression of romantic intensity and to romanticize extreme loyalty and jealousy. This measure is referred to as the

Dominance and Romanticism Scale (DOMROM).

In Follingstad's study, frequency and severity of abuse were hypothesized to be related to attitudinal and behavioral characteristics of female victims of force in dating relationships. Romance and dominance was one attitudinal factor examined. Forty-eight single female undergraduate and graduate students who had experienced dating violence were administered three items from Follingstad's DOMROM Scale which were found to have similar content in a previous study. The DOMROM items were responded to on a 4-point Likert scale. The dominance item stated, "It is exciting to have a man demonstrate his physical power over you in a way that is fun and not hurtful". Two romanticism items assessed extreme jealousy and loyalty. These items stated: "It is flattering to have a man who is jealous of you, because it indicates how much he cares" and "In serious relationships, almost all one's loyalty and energy should be devoted to one's boyfriend rather than friends".

When a univariate analysis was performed to determine the effect of dominance and romanticism beliefs on women experiencing one incident of abuse versus ongoing abuse, no significant difference was found. However, a significant difference was found between the women experiencing earlier onset of physical abuse versus later onset of physical abuse. Women experiencing earlier onset of abuse were more likely to endorse beliefs of dominance and romanticism. The researchers suggested that perhaps the females in the earlier onset group gave off unintentional cues that they were more "victimizible"; therefore, controlling males may seek out women with these traits and begin controlling behaviors earlier on in the relationship.

The same study by Follingstad also examined the subjects' feelings of love toward their partners. Follingstad assessed feelings of love with Rubin's Love Scale (1970). In developing the 13-item scale, Rubin made the assumption "that love is an attitude held by a person toward a particular other person, involving predispositions to think, feel, and behave in certain ways toward that other person".

Rubin integrated three major components into his conceptualization of romantic love. In his study he points out the congruency of his conceptualization with several other theorists. The affiliative and dependent need component is congruent with Freud's idea of love as sublimated sexuality, as well as Harlow's concept of equating love with attachment behavior. The second component, a predisposition to help, is in accordance with Fromm's four identified components of love: care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge. Finally, the third component, exclusiveness and absorption, is congruent with Slater's analysis of the social-structural implications of dyadic intimacy.

Using Rubin's Love Scale, Follingstad found that females experiencing one incident of abuse reported a significantly lower level of love for their partners than women experiencing ongoing abuse. Women experiencing earlier onset of abuse

reported significantly higher levels of love for their partner than women experiencing later onset of abuse.

Rubin's Love Scale was also used in a study by Flynn, which examined feelings of love, sex roles, and courtship violence (1990). In this study the final sample from an original pool of 693 women consisted of 59 undergraduates. To be included in the final sample the student had to be black or white, age 23 or younger, and never married. They also had to have experienced violence in a past relationship and made the decision to end the relationship at least partly due to the violence. This multivariate study used length of time a woman stayed in a relationship following her partner's first use of violence as the dependent variable. The independent variables were the woman's sex role attitudes and her masculinity. Three variables that were predicted to affect how long a woman might stay with her partner served as covariates: love for the partner, amount of violence, and length of relationship when the violence first occurred.

Rubin's Love Scale was administered with the instructions to base responses on how the woman felt a few days before the first violent incident occurred. The results were as predicted: the more often violence occurred, the more a woman loved her partner, and the longer they had been dating when the violence occurred, the longer she remained in the relationship.

In addition to exploring women's feelings of love for their partners, research in the area of abuse has also examined women's feelings of love for self as embodied by their self-esteem. A study by Trimpey examined self-esteem and anxiety in a support group population (1989). Trimpey organized a support group for women seeking help in coping with physical and emotional abuse by a male partner. At the end of the first group session, each participant was given the Culture-Free Self-Esteem Inventory for Adults and the State Trait Anxiety Inventory. The results showed that three-quarters of the women in the group suffered from low self-esteem. The abused group also responded to threats to their current physical and emotional well-being with greater anxiety (Trimpey 1989).

In addition to presenting her study, Trimpey reviewed several other studies in the area of self-esteem and abuse. Trimpey discussed Walker's (1979) report that women in abusive relationships are subject to emotional as well as physical abuse from their partners. Over a period of time emotional abuse can negatively influence self-esteem. After time an abused woman may incorporate the abuser's judgements into her own and in doing so diminish her own self-worth.

Trimpey also reported Hilberman (1980) and Carmen's (1981) findings that abused women experience a stress-response syndrome that includes agitation, fatigue, depression, guilt, hidden anger, and severe anxiety. Also reported by Trimpey is Rosenberg's discussion of the importance of the support group as a valid therapeutic tool to enhance self-esteem. Members of these groups acknowledge their need for help by participating in the group. This acknowledgement for help is an important

step in overcoming denial and focusing realistically on their problem of being abused. Working with others in the same or similar situations diminishes isolation and helps foster a positive self-concept through guidance and reinforcement from other group members.

The main objective of the present research is to identify personality differences in abused versus non-abused women. It was hypothesized that abused women would score lower on the Self-Esteem Scale and higher on both the Love Scale and the Dominance and Romanticism Scale than non-abused women.

METHODS

SUBJECTS:

There were a total of 64 women that participated in this study, making up two subject groups. One subject group consisted of 39 women from three different night school classes. The other subject group included 25 battered women from three different Women's Centers in Pottstown, Lancaster, and Allentown.

MEASURES:

Various personality measures were administered to the women. Three of the four measures were previously developed to test other hypothesis, and the fourth was developed by the researchers to test the hypothesis stated in the abstract.

Rubin's Love Scale

Rubin (1970) developed a scale with assumption that love is an interpersonal attitude. The scale asses the construct of romantic love. Three components make up the scale: (a) affilitative and dependent need; (b) a predisposition to help; and (c) an orientation of exclusiveness and absorption. Although Rubin did not assess the reliability of the scale, he did determine a high degree of convergent validity which was demonstrated in a laboratory experiment in which it was found that couples with low score. A good degree of discrimination validity was also determined by the finding of only a moderate correlation with a "liking-scale". Since its development, the Rubin Love Scale has been a popular measure of romantic love.

Dominance and Romanticism Scale

Follingstad et al.(1980) developed the dominance items of the scale as follows: "It is exciting to have a man demonstrate his physical power over you in a way that is fun and not hurtful." The romanticism items were developed to assess extreme loyalty and jealousy in serious relationships, almost all one's loyalty and energy should be devoted to one's boyfriend rather than friends." These items are responded to on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. An abbreviated version of this measure was used in the study.

Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg (1965) developed this measure to assess the self-acceptance aspect of self-esteem. The scale consists of 10 items answered on a 4-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. It is considered to be unidemsiional scale and was originally given to a sample of over 5000 advanced high school students from 10 random New

York schools. Since then, a wide variety of samples have been used and similar results occurred with adults (Robinson and Shaver, 1973). A test-retest correlation was found to be 0.85 and reproducibility coefficient of 0.92 was determined (Rosenberg, 1965), thereby establishing reasonable reliability of the measure. This scale has reasonable convergent and discriminant validity (Robinson and Shaver, 1973).

The SES Determinants were also developed by the researchers to determine the SES of the subjects. There are four items in this scale: the first item deals with assessing the SES of the subjects, two items determine the status of the relationships, and the fourth item is the question "Do you love your partner?" This question is to be compared with the subject's score on the Rubin's Love Scale. There are also two additional questions assessing the frequency of emotional and physical abuse to be rated on a scale from Never to Often. Included in the definitions of emotional and physical abuse.

PROCEDURE:

All subjects completed Rubin's Love Scale (Rubin, 1970), the abbreviated Dominance and Romanticism Scale (Follingstad et al.), Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1963), and seven other questions developed by the researchers pertaining to emotional nad physical abuse and personal history. The night school students were administered the questionnaire during class. The abused subjects completed the questionnaire during support group meetings.

INSTRUCTIONS:

This is a questionnaire about relationships with boyfriends and husbands. For the following questions please respond using a 10 point scale where 10 means strongly agree and 1 means strongly disagree.

Section 1:

1. If your partner were feeling badly, would your first duty be to cheer him up? _____
2. Do you feel that you can confide in your partner about virtually everything? _____
3. Do you find it easy to ignore your partner's faults? _____
4. Would you do almost anything for your partner? _____
5. Do you feel very possessive toward your partner? _____
6. If you could never be with your partner, would you feel miserable? _____
7. If you were lonely, would your first thought be to seek your partner out? _____
8. Is one of your primary concerns your partner's welfare? _____
9. Would you forgive your partner for practically anything? _____
10. Do you feel responsible for your partner's well-being? _____
11. When you are with your partner, do you spend a good deal of time just looking at him? _____
12. Would you greatly enjoy having your partner confide in you? _____
13. Would it be hard for you to get along without your partner? _____
14. Do you believe it is exciting to have a man demonstrate his physical power over you in a way that is fun and not hurtful? _____
15. Do you believe it is flattering to have a man who is jealous of you, because it indicates how much he cares? _____
16. Do you believe that in serious relationships, almost all one's loyalty and energy should be devoted to one's partner rather than friends? _____
17. On the whole, are you satisfied with yourself? _____
18. At times, do you think you are no good at all? _____
19. Do you feel that you have a number of good qualities? _____
20. Are you able to do things as well as most other people? _____

RESULTS

Summary scores on the dominance scale, the self-esteem scale, and the love scale were calculated for each subject by adding the directionally adjusted items. Although there was a significant correlation between reported relationship experiences of physical abuse and emotional abuse ($r=.76$, $p<.001$, $n=46$), separate analyses were performed on the physical and emotional abuse independent variables.

T-test comparisons revealed that the physically abused women scored significantly lower on the dominance scale ($x=18.20$, $s.d.=8.14$, $n=25$, $t_{61}=2.02$, $p<.047$) than the non-physically abused women ($x=21.92$, $s.d.=6.41$, $n=38$). The physically abused women scored significantly lower on the self-esteem scale ($x=65.16$, $s.d.=17.81$, $n=25$, $t_{61}=2.85$, $p<.006$) than the non-physically abused women ($x=78.21$, $s.d.=17.76$, $n=38$). On the love scale the physically abused women had significantly lower scores ($x=70.48$, $s.d.=13.88$, $n=25$, $t_{59}=3.06$, $p<.003$) than the non-physically abused women ($x=80.39$, $s.d.=11.32$, $n=36$). The physically abused women were significantly older ($x=37.56$, $s.d.=9.27$, $n=25$, $t_{62}=3.18$, $p<.002$) than the non-physically abused women ($x=30.54$, $s.d.=8.18$, $n=39$). The length of the relationship for the physically abused women ($x=37.00$, $s.d.=36.35$, $n=22$, $t_{57}=.12$, $p>.903$) and the non-physically abused women ($x=38.22$, $s.d.=37.35$, $n=37$) did not differ significantly.

Similar to the women who had been physically abused, there was a trend for emotionally abused women to score lower on the dominance scale ($x=18.88$, $s.d.=7.77$, $n=34$, $t_{61}=1.87$, $p>.066$) than the non-emotionally abused women ($x=22.28$, $s.d.=6.40$, $n=29$). On the self-esteem scale the emotionally abused women had significantly lower scores ($x=64.97$, $s.d.=20.26$, $n=34$, $t_{61}=4.14$, $p<.000$) than the non-emotionally abused women ($x=82.48$, $s.d.=11.20$ $n=29$). The emotionally abused women had significantly lower scores on the love measure ($x=72.47$, $s.d.=13.76$, $n=34$, $t_{59}=2.68$, $p<.01$) than the non-emotionally abused women ($x=81.19$, $s.d.=11.04$, $n=27$). There was a significant difference in age between the emotionally abused group ($x=35.91$, $s.d.=9.55$, $t_{62}=2.53$, $p<.014$) and the non-emotionally abused group ($x=30.30$, $s.d.=7.98$, $n=30$). The length of relationship did not differ significantly for the two groups ($x=37.16$, $s.d.=35.58$, $n=31$, $t_{57}=-.13$, $p>.896$ versus $x=38.43$, $s.d.=38.47$, $n=28$).

Age was not significantly correlated with scores on the the dominance scale, the self-esteem scale, or love scale.

DISCUSSION

In support of the hypothesis, both the physically and emotionally abused women were more likely to endorse beliefs of dominance and romanticism than the non-abused women. There are several ways in which these results can be interpreted. For the abused groups, it is possible that if we would have been able to test the women "pre-abuse", they would have been significantly less likely to endorse beliefs of dominance and romanticism. The change in belief at "post-abuse" testing could be explained by theorizing that abused women alter their belief systems to cope with the abuse they receive from someone who claims to love them.

Rationalizing abusive behavior as a macho expression of deep love may make the partner's behavior more tolerable.

A second interpretation is that even before the abuse began, the women held stronger beliefs in dominance and romanticism than the "average" woman. Perhaps abused women have been socialized to believe that it is romantic for a man to be jealous and territorial toward a woman and that it is exciting for a man to demonstrate his physical power over a woman. These women may have been taught that they should devote their energy and loyalty almost entirely to their man. According to this theory, it is the woman's socialization which has caused her stronger endorsement of dominance and romanticism rather than the experience of abuse. Women socialized in this manner might be more likely to be attracted to a violence-prone lover. Another possible theory is that women socialized in this manner might inadvertently provoke violent behavior as a way of validating the partner's love. Or the women may experience greater ambivalence about leaving an abusive partner because of a tendency to justify the behavior as rooted in passion.

One last possibility is that the difference between the abused and non-abused groups may be attributed to the fact that the majority of subjects in the non-abused group were night-school students at a competitive liberal arts college. This group may be very different from the abused women in many ways other than just the experience of abuse. The night-school women are likely to be more intelligent, motivated, and independent, and they may hold less traditional beliefs. Therefore, sampling differences ,rather than the experience of abuse, may have caused differences in the endorsement of beliefs of dominance and romanticism. Future research might include use of a sample of non abused women matched on the intellectual and motivational variables.

Our hypothesis that abused women would score higher on the love scale than nonabused women was not supported by the data. Instead, it was found that both the emotionally and physically abused women had significantly lower scores on the love scale than the nonabused women. We had originally postulated that one of the reasons that a woman stayed in an abusive relationship was because of a high love addiction. In other words the women,, because of her deep love for her partner deal with and change his abusive ways. Basically, we assumed that abused women endorsed the belief that "true love can conquer all" and expected that their love would enable them to overcome all hardships, includijng abusive episodes. However this apparently was not the case. The abused women reported significantly less loving feelings toward their partners than nonabused women. An obvious explanation of this is that either type of abuse diminishes love by causing pain, fear mistrust, and resentment. Thus,love addiction does not appear to convincingly explain why abused address other alternative explanations of why many abused women are so reluctant to leave their relationship.

One possibility could be that a woman's fear of the consequences of learning inhibit her departure. This would help explain why abused women reported lower feelings of love, yet still stayed in the relationship. Fear of the abusive partners' potentially violent response to the woman's departure may make it hard for many women to leave, even when they no longer love their partner. Terminating any relationship is painful and difficult, but to have to deal with a demanding and abusive partner who will not allow the relationship to end can be tormentful and dangerous. Often men threaten departing women, saying they will never see their children again or they will never hold another job. Furthermore, financial obstacles frequently prevent women from taking appropriate self-protective steps.

The results of this study support the hypothesis that abused women would score lower on the Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1963). As predicted, both the emotionally and physically abused women's scores were significantly lower than non-abused women.

The difference could be due to the effects of a partner's abuse on a woman's self-esteem, which typically involves a vicious cycle. It begins with a stage of tension building between the abuser and the abused woman. Nothing that the woman can say or do is right. This stage is followed by the actual battering stage in which the woman gets abused. After the actual abuse, the woman experiences the honeymoon stage, during which the abuser expresses complete remorse and sorrow and promises he will never abuse her again.

Being caught in the cycle of abuse makes women feel very alone and isolated. They feel very powerless and ineffective at stopping the abuse from happening. They are in constant fear of what harm they may experience and the prospect of losing their lives. In these cases fear, powerlessness, and low self-esteem dominate all other emotions.

Emotionally abused women typically put themselves down. They become afraid to do what they want or say what they think. Because they second guess everything that they do, they look toward their partner for identity, thus becoming very emotionally attached to him. They oftentimes feel responsible for any violence and are socially ashamed of being battered. Even in the cases where the women realize that they are not responsible for their abuse, the reactions of those around them may induce those feelings.

Many of these women have very traditional views of marriage, home and family. They believe that they must stay married at any and all cost. The abused women experience give them the message that they are unsuccessful at marriage. This belief makes them reluctant to leave these relationships and makes them feel worse about themselves.

Another possibility is that women with lower self-esteem may be more likely to be attracted to abusive partners, or more willing to settle for an abusive

relationship. According to this formulation, the self-esteem deficit predicts the abuse. Future research should address this possibility through use of a prospective longitudinal design.

Age was confounded with both types of abuse in this study. There was a tendency for members of the abused sample to be older. However, age was not significantly correlated with any of the dependent variables. Therefore, this tendency probably did not account for the observed differences in attitudes about dominance, self-esteem, and love.

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